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ADEN

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ADEN

Abstract

His room. His room is a burning aquarium. The moon has set. The click of prayer beads Soothes someone's panic downstairs. Any minute now the sun's evil eye Will peer through the packing-crate shutters To settle on a scale hung from the ceiling.

J.D. McClatchy

ADEN

Rimbaud dying

His room. His room is a burning aquarium.
The moon has set. The click of prayer beads
Soothes someone's panic downstairs.
Any minute now the sun's evil eye
Will peer through the packing-crate shutters
To settle on a scale hung from the ceiling.

The indifferent day stretches out on rawhide
And chews its qat. The bandage is sweating,
His leg is sweating, his knee now swollen
To the size of a skull. Angels in his veins
Weep for their empty sabbath and loot his sorrows.
Stalls in the Market of Silence open next door.

The world is happening again without him.
Grit's blown up onto the trussed sharks.
Two subalterns in topees are arguing.
Dhows at the wharf, gharries at the curb,
Mongrels and hawkers and slops in the shade.
The black boy beside him whispers "*Mektoub.*"

Where is forgiveness? A hand is stroking
His head, the fingers like albino carp
Gliding aimlessly through his hair,
Brushing sometimes against the fever-weed.
Where is forgiveness? Sleep with your eyes open,
Sleep on the stone you have made of your heart.

Here at the end – Death clumsy as an old priest –
Some words, some oil, a thin broth of memory ...
Lying at night in a waving wheatfield, face to face
With the sky's black icon. The stars are moving too.
They rustle like a silk in whose pleats are kept
The changes: flesh to flame, ash to air.